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SCOTTISH PATRIOTISM.

ANNUAL SERMON

BEFORE THE

ST. ANDREW'S SOCIETY,

BY THE

REV. J. C. BAXTER,

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SERMON.

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THE SERMON.

"MINDFUL OF THAT COUNTRY FROM WHENCE THEY CAME OUT."
—*Hebrews, xi, 15.*

On this day, noted somehow in the calendar, "that country" is our fatherland met for worship in our Father's house, [illegible] why patriot Scots should be "mindful from whence [illegible]" Mindful of that country, we do not forget the [illegible] of others. "God that made the world hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth." Scripture, that guides our course, has enjoined a philanthropy which folds in sympathetic arms the widest wants of every peopled province. And taught by Gospel truths, we would be led by Gospel laws to help the time when over the globe the millions who bear the human name shall show and share the sight of brethren banded together in unity.

But while, in broad Christian view, nothing that is human can be foreign to us—none the less may hallowed hearts throb with special love for those who, like ourselves, are heirs of the history or destiny which natal neighbourship implies. Such sanctified attachment to kinsfolk has ever formed a firm cord in noble breasts. Prophets and Apostles inspired for spreading pure religion to the utmost range have set examples of ardour for ancestral privileges. Nay; Jesus himself, who tabernacled in flesh for the welfare of the world, was touched with the feeling of

peculiar affection toward Israelites indeed. "Compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses," justly may the memory of their deeds draw us to tread in their steps; and when thoughts go up to the heroes whose renown constitutes the richest dower of the country whence we came out, our cherished mindfulness should stir for worthiest ends, the question—What manner of persons ought the sons of Scottish sires to be?

As Zion, coming into mind of the scattered tribes, drew them "to take pleasure in her stones and to favour the dust thereof," so we, who are away from scenes familiar in younger years, confess to a sentiment of fondness for the homes which distance only strengthens. Lofty hill or shaggy heath — tiny brook or grassy brae—mossy lea or wavy loch— these are vividly recalled; and though in vastness unequal to the mountains or forests, the rivers or prairies, the vales, or lakes of immediate surroundings, we seldom fail to measure the impressiveness of the latter, as they seem to mirror the attractiveness of the former. Grand panorama of nature greets him who stands for survey on the Royal height which crowns our city; but its value appears enhanced when the whole suggests similitudes that speak to us of far-off Caledonia! Behind, the Laurentian range may image to our eyes the Northern Grampian chain. In front, the Adirondacks, running through another realm may tell us of the Cheviots that link our soil with the south of Britain. West or East of us, as fancy sweeps from ocean to ocean, with rapids, islets, falls and straits, we picture varied points from Pentland Firth to Solway Sands. And thus reading the local map we find the perusal a real pleasure, because its lessons freshen remembrance of regions still dear as the spots about which past travel circled or early associations clung.

But precious as geographic visions are, their chief power to arrest attention lies in the events with which they have been coupled. Here, on this new Continent, what boundless tracts remain without a social record? There, in that old country, at almost every turn, the figures of sturdy workers rivet our gaze; and if the tracings of landmarks lately exhibited in the adjoining Rink are reviewed with due reflections, how suited might the series be to teach us concerning successive stages of our kingdom's career Let us who were among the spectators be mindful of those art-instructive specimens. Staffa, with its cathedral columned cave, and its legends of a giant age; Dumbarton Rock, with its footprints of warrior Wallace, and its stories of his fearless fight for freedom; Holyrood, with its relics of despotic sway and its vestiges of feudal struggle; Mossgiel, with its hints of hardship for the boyhood of Burns, and its foreshadows of his fame wherever lyric poetry is sung; Abbotsford, with its treasured items of the "Great Unknown," and its tales of influence which the author of Waverley still wields; Glasgow, with its crowded haunts of commerce, and its fleets which navigate all seas in search of gain; Edinburgh, with its halls of science and Courts of Session which merit for it the oft-accorded name of modern Athens; Balmoral, with its proofs that our Sovereign has her heart in the Highlands, and its signs that loyalty to the throne glows nowhere warmer than among the clans of Mar. Such were some of the photographs with our musings from them in the school across the road; and when we think of what they told about courage in battle or changes in sceptre—about success in business or progress in culture, the result is to render us proud of our country, though by no means proud of our pride.

Yet the basis of our country's glory is deeper than the merely

secular. A spirit of piety has been the prop of its stability; nor were mementoes of such an element omitted from the list of recent representations. As we caught a glimpse of Fingal's abode, Iona loomed in the horizon, with its venerable ruins, which lead back to Culdee periods, when, through the zeal of Columba and his followers, the light of vital religion rose like a fertilizing sun to nourish the fruits of holiness on fields that before were moral wastes. Melrose, with its Abbey, reared by Popish devotees, whispered of an age when the native Church had lost its simple graces and fell under the corrupting grasp of ambitious Anti-Christ. St. Giles, with the Canongate, spoke to us of the revolt against Rome, which centuries of godless tyranny forced on a groaning populace, and pre-eminently of the one man whom Providence prepared for the triumph of Protestantism. Others had striven and suffered already in the conflict; their efforts and sacrifices not utter failures, since they pioneered the path for the perfect victory to come. But defeat after defeat sustained, the champions of the cross were verging on despair, and the torch of truth which they had lit from the fires of the Lord's altar to fling flashing sparks over the land was dashed in the dust, as if waiting to be quenched. Then sudden news startled the capital, and let another pen portray the issues of the unexpected tidings. "The cry arose everywhere, 'John Knox is come.' All the town rushed into the streets, the old and the young, the lordly and the lowly, were seen mingling and marvelling together. All tasks of duty were forsaken, priests abandoned their masses, mothers hurried from their domestic toil to ask what strange thing had occurred, travellers mounting their steeds hasted into rural quarters with the report. At every cottage door the inmates stood in clusters, silent and surprised, as horseman succeeded horseman,

shouting, 'John Knox is come.' Barques that were quitting port bore up to signal ships at sea. Shepherds were summoned from their stations, students were aroused from their books, sentinels on watch-towers when challenging those who approached, were answered 'John Knox is come.'" The sound of this name paralysed the plans of foes, and revived the hopes of friends. And from that hour till now wherever the echoes of his potent voice or the skirts of his wondrous mantle float over the districts to which God's love gave him, we owe a debt of deathless gratitude to one of the truest of the true, one of the bravest of the brave, whom brave, true men should delight to honour.

Reverting to that era with its confusions and convulsions out of which have sprung our order and repose, well may we endorse the tribute of Carlyle to our arch reformer. "His great message was, 'let men know that they are men, created by God, responsible to God; who work in any meanest moment of time what will last through eternity." This message he did deliver with a man's strength and found a people to believe him. Of such an achievement were it to be made once only, the outcomes are immense. Thought, in such a country, may change its form, but cannot die. The country has attained majority; a certain spiritual manhood, ready for all work that man can do, endures there. The national character originated in many circumstances; first of all, in the Saxon stuff there was to work on, and, above all else except that, in the Presbysterian Gospel of John Knox."

Besides, later epochs were brought to mind by sketches of other celebrated places. Killiecrankie, with its wild Pass carried us mentally to the martyrs "wha ance, upon auld Scotia's hills, were hunted like the paitrick, were hacked with swords and shot wit guns, frae Tummel's banks to Ettrick." Stirling, with its verdan

carse, bore us away to the seceders who, resisting lay patronage in ecclesiastical spheres, took a position which, in the lapse of more than a hundred and forty years, the Kirk they left has practically vindicated. But why adduce additional instances? Those selected may suffice to illustrate the statement that, for the valour and vigour which stamp our kindred, an underlying all-pervading tone of religiousness must be recognized; and nothing short of this heritage is the secret of their descendants' determination, at any cost to preserve and perpetuate the legacy of liberty. Accusations, indeed, of abject obedience by the nation to clerical control have been cast upon the Scotch. Mr. Buckle, in his volumes on Civilsation, has even dared to allege that for blind homage to the beck of ministers, the masses in Scotland are stupid as priest-ridden classes in Spain. The charge is a libel; the logic of facts refutes it. If the pulpit ever had the power to mould the populace, it has not reached the post by delusive devices or for selfish purposes. Its occupants have been defenders of the people rights, repairers of the people's wrongs; foremost in peril; firmest in trials; the faithful pastors of the trustful flocks, and so magnifying their office as heralds of Him who is the giver and guardian of every good, they have done for the community much of what only Ambassadors of Christ could accomplish; much also for which the best trained, the most candid of the commonwealth there or here, of anywhere offer thankful acknowledgment. But whether directed by church leaders or dependent on different councillors, the evidence remains incontrovertible, that whatever of industry or integrity, whatever of dignity or solidity has been connected with individuals or institutions of our native land is deducible from intelligent, conscientious reverence for the Divine will revealed in the Bible. "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say."

Now it is no trivial advantage to call "Scots worthies" our forbears; it is something for us in the present to be hereditarily identified with them in the past; and if though dead they yet speak, let us be mindful of that country from whence we came out by fostering fittest admiration for the men of old. To live with such men in their biographies is to mix with the choicest of company. To sneer at antiquity is the badge of a flippant society, the mockers rob themselves of the surest shield against future decay. But sober respect for what has been, nerves for serious effort after what should be, and situated where or as we are, let us manifest our esteem for bequeathed benefits by resembling "the children of Issachar that had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do." Ought to do—what? Shun imitation of any faults which the predecessors in in our country committed. Stains there are on its annals; nor would we shut our eyes to foul blots that deface the register. Let them be called to mind, however, not for the sake of ridicule but in a frame of regret. He is no patriot who, to make an oratorical hit, or raise an uproarious laugh with his audience spurts out coarse jests at the expense of even the follies that strew the land of his birth. "Show me the man," says an American Writer, "who looks down on the land of his birth, and I will show you a man who should be looked after in the land of his adoption." But we are not enemies when avowing the truth, we lament palpable blemishes, and while dealing blows against evils with a hand of steel we have our hand clad as in a glove of velvet. Especially when remote from habitation where such errors or vices seem rooted, let us beware of transplanting hither the poisonous thorns, and if we cannot clear the ground *there* of hurtful customs we should at least try *here* to hinder their inroad as we would escape

their injury. Ought to do—what? Seek imitation of every excellence for which the predecessors in our country were distinguished. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things." The worse aspects of our ancestors glare as beacons to warn us from the shoals on which many were wrecked: the better features shine like heaven-set orbs by whose tested gleam our own voyage to the eternal shore may be safely steered: and admonished in the one light to renounce the sin which is a reproach to any people, we are encouraged in the other to uphold the righteousness which exalteth a nation. 'This is the way, walk ye in it,' sounds the voice of our parent territory to us who have come out to an adopted colony. Be good and do good, still ring the strains from that same source. Never blush for your ancestry, nor favour aught because of which that ancestry must blush for you. Grow in energy, in rectitude, in personal godliness—as ye have us for example. Expand your desires beyond private improvement. Let showers of blessing that drop on your souls glide in loving streams to the welfare of a widening circumference. Act unitedly like the cloud 'which if it move at all moves altogether.' And borne along with such a current of steadfast, useful, sacred, humble resolve you will further the future of this embryo empire as the bent of your labour is shaped by the zeal of your prayer. "Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants and Thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us: yea, the work of our hands, establish Thou it."

Perhaps in the matter of public spiritedness, some men are prone to do nothing, on the plea that they cannot do much. The

pretext is a mistake—a fallacy forged by Satan to lull the soul asleep, and frustrate if possible, the scheme of Divine operation in advancing the prospects of a country. "God does most of His great works by the few, not by the many—by the feeble, not by the strong—by the bruised reed, not by the glittering spear. If we but use the gifts conferred on us in their natural and healthy way, He will equip us for any enterprise, be it the most difficult or dangerous in which brain or muscle may engage." Here, then there is work for all—special work for each, from the ripest settler in the Dominion to the latest immigrant who enters our docks; work not for the *Scotticising* of Canada, but for importing into it a graft of the pith, the push, the patience, the piety that have been the germ and sap of Scotland's prosperity. Going forth in this our might; active, hopeful, earnest, we shall leave footprints on our chosen lot which set aside the fear of impotence to serve our generation, and the risk of being rated, ages hence, among cumberers of the ground. Emphatically, should the youthful among us be mindful of this appeal. They come with buoyancy, appropriate to their years; let them toil with a perseverance which meanwhile is their soul of action; and eager for recompense, in pecuniary store, or political state, as they may be, let them covet the higher satisfaction which flows from the inward consciousness of having contributed to the genuine happiness of their fellows; beyond all, from the assurance of being workers for Him whose judgment is infallible, and whose promise is irreversible—"Them that honour Me I will honour," saith the Father of the families of the whole earth.

We pass—the path that each man trod
Is dim, or will be dim with weeds,
What fame is left for human deeds
In endless age? it rests with God.

Will you permit me a sentence or two regarding the obligation to assist by liberal beneficence the necessitous among our kinsfolk in Montreal. For relief of the Scottish poor, St. Andrew's Society was organized; of what avail in softening the sorrows of the destitute its agencies have been, hundreds are ready to declare. The return of winter, with probable severity and scarcity of employment, commands the Committee to double their labours of love, and bespeak on their behalf the support of all who can aid their brethren. "I show mercy to the man, not as he is wicked, but because he is a man of my own nature," was the generous reply of a heathen philosopher to friends who wondered at his compassion for a profligate alms-seeker. Why, then, should we refuse even a prodigal's suit, if practical Christianity would adorn our profession? But when poverty and honesty are combined, as in most cases that receive succour at our Home's hands, certainly a response to the present request for funds should be neither paltry nor tardy. I have read of an Egyptian emblem, which through hieroglyphic medium, pictured what the dwellers near the Nile deemed the ideal of Charity—a modest child, with a heart in his hand, giving honey to a bee without wings. This is the interpretation thereof. The child represents the lowliness of benevolence; the heart in the hand, the cheerfulness of benevolence; the giving honey to a bee without wings, the worthiness and helplessness of the object of benevolence. Brother Scots: Apply the lesson; be unostentatious, not pretentious; encouraging, not repellant; appreciative, not indiscriminate in deeds of charity; and next to the joy of being approved unto God for the exercise of this grace will be the comfort that even in the absence of other applause from the world, each well-doer for the distressed may feel "THE BLESSING OF HIM WHO WAS READY TO PERISH CAME UPON ME."